



CITY OF CLEVELAND

Mayor Justin M. Bibb

**City of Cleveland
Request for Qualifications**

Federal Lobbyist Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Issued: 7/8/22

Responses Due: 11:59 p.m. 8/10/22

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Scope of Services.....	2
3.	Schedule & Deliverables	3
4.	Submission Process and Schedule.....	4
a.	Principal Contact.....	4
b.	Submission Instructions	4
c.	RFQ Schedule.....	5
d.	Pre-Submittal Conference.....	5
e.	Submitting Questions	5
f.	Forms.....	5
g.	Submission Terms	5
i.	The City's Rights and Requirements.....	5
ii.	Failure to Comply	6
iii.	Term of Proposal's Effectiveness	6
iv.	Execution of a Contract	6
v.	"Short-listing"	7
vi.	Proposer's Familiarity with RFQ; Responsibility for Proposal.....	7
vii.	Interpretation	7
5.	Proposer Qualifications	8
6.	Submission Contents.....	9
a.	Cover Page.....	9
b.	Cover Letter.....	9
c.	Table of Contents.....	9
d.	Executive Summary.....	9
e.	Proposer's Exceptions (if any, to RFQ requirements or provisions).....	9
f.	Proposed Team Members	9
g.	Minimum Qualifications	9
h.	Evaluation Framework.....	10
i.	Detailed Narrative Describing Proposer's Approach (35 points)	10

ii.	Analysis and Methods (35 points)	10
iii.	Applications and Opportunities (35 points)	10
iv.	Firm's Experience (25 points)	10
v.	Organization (20 points)	10
vi.	Available Staff Experience (20 points)	10
i.	Fees and Expenses	11
j.	Supplemental Information	11

1. Introduction

The City of Cleveland, under the leadership of Mayor Justin M. Bibb, his administration, and Cleveland City Council, have embarked upon a sweeping agenda to make Cleveland a model municipality for the nation. The City has long faced serious challenges: poverty, mental health, climate change, lead, the enduring legacy of racial injustice. But Cleveland is on the cusp of a new era.

Under new leadership, the City is making serious investments to drive equitable growth. It is leading the nation in police accountability and public safety through the swift implementation of local Issue 24. It has passed “Complete and Green Streets” legislation, major reforms to residential property tax abatements, and initiatives to revitalize storied assets like the West Side Market. And every gear is turning to produce a more responsive, more engaged local government for Cleveland residents.

For Cleveland to reach its full potential, however, it needs strong, bipartisan partnerships in the federal government—to influence policy, make its residents’ voices heard, and bring money home from Washington. Through this RFQ, the City seeks a government relations firm to help establish and develop those relationships, to maximize the resources and positive impact the federal government can bring to Cleveland.

2. Scope of Services

The City is seeking to partner with experienced government relations professionals to expand its presence and represent its interests in Washington. This requires the development of a viable and strategic plan to elevate the City's engagement and profile in Congress, at the executive branch, and among the agencies. Perhaps more importantly, this requires securing support and funding for key initiatives, projects, and interests for the City of Cleveland.

The specific services sought by this RFQ include but are not limited to:

- managing a government relations function that allows the Mayor and his staff to direct and oversee the City's business in Washington;
- advising the City regarding establishing and developing key relationships in Washington that further City's interests;
- assisting the City in developing strategies to advance federal legislative and policy positions;
- lobbying the legislative branch, the executive branch, and federal agencies to adopt positions benefiting the City's interests on priority issues;
- submitting the City's annual appropriations requests;
- identifying federal grant and competitive funding sources for City priorities;
- identifying opportunities for appropriate City officials to testify, in order to advance the City's interests and showcase the City's needs and amenities;
- providing information necessary for the City to monitor the provision of the above services; and
- periodically coordinate activities with government relations firm selected to represent the Mayor and his Administration on matters before the State of Ohio.

3. Schedule & Deliverables

The provider will be expected to:

- submit regular written reports to and participate in regularly scheduled meetings with the Mayor and his staff concerning strategies to advance the City's advocacy agenda;
- identify funding opportunities and facilitate opportunities for City officials and agencies to express the City's interests and concerns; and
- report on progress, successes, and obstacles.

The provider will propose a work schedule based on its experience working with the uncertain pace and scheduling of legislative sessions, as well as to match with the City's needs. The City will expect the provider to be available as needed to monitor specific developments and advance the City's interests.

The provider will be under contract to provide these services for a period estimated to start no sooner than September 1, 2022 and last through December 31, 2023.

4. Submission Process and Schedule

a. Principal Contact

Austin Davis, Senior Government Affairs Strategist & Assistant Director of Law, is the single point of contact (“Principal Contact”) for all matters relating to this RFQ. Proposers should direct all inquiries to the Principal Contact at: adavis3@clevelandohio.gov.

Proposers should not, under any circumstances, contact any City personnel (including senior City management or City employees with whom Proposers have an existing business or personal relationship) to discuss this RFQ without the Principal Contact’s prior written consent. Utmost discretion is expected of Proposers and all other RFQ recipients. Any recipient attempting to circumvent this process will risk elimination from further participation in the bidding process.

b. Submission Instructions

Proposer shall submit their Proposal electronically. Submissions shall be sent via email to the Principal Contact. The email subject heading should be in the following format: “RFQ [RFQ Number] – Cleveland Federal Lobbyist RFQ – [firm name] – Submission”.

The Finance and Fee Proposal must be packaged separately from the rest of the Proposal, submitted, ie in a different file attached to the same submission email.

Submissions should be prepared using Microsoft Office file formats to the maximum extent possible. They may be submitted in Adobe PDF formats or other common formats as appropriate.

Submissions must be made by 11:59pm on August 10, 2022.

Submissions received after the deadline, which state that information will be provided “at a later date,” or which are otherwise incomplete or fail to comply with the requirements set forth in this RFQ will be disqualified from participation in this RFQ process. Submissions that are not made via email to the Principal Contact with the appropriate email subject heading may also be disqualified from participation.

Submissions may not be amended after the submission deadline.

c. RFQ Schedule

The City has developed an estimated timeline for this RFQ. The City will move as quickly and efficiently as possible to determine the feasibility of each submission, move forward with term sheet discussions, and ultimately conclude an agreement. The City reserves the right to modify or update this schedule at any point in time.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
7/8/22	RFQ Release
7/15/22	Pre-Submittal Conference
8/2/22	Deadline for Submitting Questions
8/10/22	Deadline for Submitting Responses
8/11/22	City Begins Follow-Up and Contract Negotiations

d. Pre-Submittal Conference

A non-mandatory pre-submittal conference will be held on July 15, 2022 via Microsoft Teams from 12pm-1pm. The video conference link is [available here](#). Proposers can also dial in via 216-306-2628, phone conference ID 454 564 231#.

e. Submitting Questions

The deadline for questions or requests for clarification is August 2, 2022 by 11:59pm. Questions must be submitted via email to the Principal Contact.

f. Forms

Note: The submission of the forms referenced below ([available here](#)) is not required with the response to this RFQ. These forms will only be submitted by the Proposer selected to enter into contract negotiations, after the qualification evaluation process. The forms will be completed at the completion of the fee negotiation.

- Non-Competitive Bid Contract Statement for Calendar Year 2022.
- Cleveland Area Business Code – Notice to Bidders & OEO Schedules.
- Northern Ireland Fair Employment Practices Disclosure.
- Federal Form W-9 including Taxpayer Identification Number.

g. Submission Terms

i. The City's Rights and Requirements

The Principal Contact may require any Proposer to augment or supplement its proposal or to meet with the City's designated representatives for interview or presentation to further describe the Proposer's qualifications and capabilities. The requested information, interview, meeting, or presentation shall be submitted or conducted, as appropriate, at a time and place the Principal Contact specifies.

The City reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any proposal that is incomplete or unresponsive to the requests or requirements of this RFQ. The City

reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive and accept any informality or discrepancy in the proposal or the process as may be in the City's best interest.

The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or portions of them, to waive irregularities, informalities, and technicalities, to re-issue or to proceed to obtain the service(s) desired otherwise, at any time or in any manner considered in the City's best interests. The Director may, at his/her sole discretion, modify or amend any provision of this notice or the RFQ.

i. Proposal as a Public Record.

Under the laws of the State of Ohio, all parts of a proposal, other than trade secret or proprietary information and the fee proposal, may be considered a public record which, if properly requested, the City must make available to the requester for inspection and copying. Therefore, to protect trade secret or proprietary information, the Proposer should clearly mark each page - but only that page - of its proposal that contains that information. The City will notify the Proposer if such information in its proposal is requested, but cannot, however, guarantee the confidentiality of any proprietary or otherwise sensitive information in or with the proposal. Blanket marking of the entire proposal as "proprietary" or "trade secret" will not protect an entire proposal and is not acceptable.

ii. Failure to Comply

When determining the contractor's future eligibility for a City contract, the City shall consider a contractor's failure to comply with the representations of its proposal and the requirements under the *Code* as a failure to faithfully perform a contract.

iii. Term of Proposal's Effectiveness

By submission of a proposal, the Proposer agrees that its proposal will remain effective and eligible for acceptance by the City until the earlier of the execution of a final contract or 180 calendar days after the proposal submission deadline (the "Proposal Expiration Date").

iv. Execution of a Contract

The Successful Proposer shall, within ten business days after receipt of a contract prepared by the City Director of Law, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, execute and return the contract to the City together with evidence of proper insurance and intent to conform to all requirements of the contract. Attached hereto or which are a part hereof and all applicable federal, state and local laws and ordinances prior to or at the time of execution of the contract.

v. “Short-listing”

The City reserves the right to select a limited number (a “short list”) of Proposers to make an oral presentation of their qualifications, proposed services, and capabilities. The City will notify the Proposers selected for oral presentations in writing.

vi. Proposer’s Familiarity with RFQ; Responsibility for Proposal

By submission of a proposal, the Proposer acknowledges that it is aware of and understands all requirements, provisions, and conditions in and of this RFQ and that its failure to become familiar with all the requirements, provisions, conditions, and information either in this RFQ or disseminated either at a pre-proposal conference or by addendum issued prior to the proposal submission deadline, and all circumstances and conditions affecting performance of the services to be rendered by the successful proposer will not relieve it from responsibility for all parts of its Proposal and, if selected for contract, its complete performance of the contract in compliance with its terms. Proposer acknowledges that the City has no responsibility for any conclusions or interpretations made by Proposer on the basis of information made available by the City. The City does not guarantee the accuracy of any information provided and Proposer expressly waives any right to a claim against the City arising from or based upon any incorrect, inaccurate, or incomplete information or information not otherwise conforming to represented or actual conditions.

vii. Interpretation

The City is not responsible for any explanation, clarification, interpretation, representation or approval made concerning this RFQ or a Proposal or given in any manner, except by written addendum. The City will deliver an electronic copy of each addendum issued, if any, to each individual or firm that requested and received a RFQ. Any addendum is a part of and incorporated in this RFQ as fully as if originally written herein.

5. Proposer Qualifications

The provider shall have completed (or shall be able to complete within a reasonable time following contract award) all requirements of registration for federal lobbying.

Vendors must meet these minimum prior experience requirements:

- extensive prior experience (minimum five years) in federal government operations, lobbying, and advocacy;
- detailed knowledge of the operations of the executive and legislative branches;
- detailed knowledge of the budget and appropriations process, rulemaking processes, and lawmaking process;
- extensive contacts within the executive and legislative branches;
- past success in identifying and securing funding opportunities for clients;
- past success in achieving policy objectives for clients;
- highest ethical standards; and
- possession of all required licenses.

6. Submission Contents

The FRQ submission should include the following sections in the following order:

a. Cover Page

- Must include RFQ number, title, and complete vendor name and mailing address.

b. Cover Letter

- Must include telephone number and mail address for Proposer's point of contact.
- Submissions must confirm that the organization will comply with all provisions of this RFQ and include a conflict of interest statement.
- Must provide a brief description of the organization including history, number of years of business operations, type of services provided, legal status (corporation, partnership, etc.), and tax number.

c. Table of Contents

d. Executive Summary

- A summary (two page maximum) of key submission features, which should include but is not limited to:
 - high-level overview of your approach to advocacy;
 - your understanding of the political context in Cleveland;
 - your understanding of the political relationship that exists between the City and the federal government;
 - your experience; and
 - the distinguishing features of your submission.

e. Proposer's Exceptions (if any, to RFQ requirements or provisions)

f. Proposed Team Members

g. Minimum Qualifications

- Description of experience and capabilities in the applicable field(s), responsive to "Proposer Qualifications" described above. Should include but is not limited to:
 - Client references
 - Resumes for proposed team members
 - Individual references for each relevant team member.
- Failure to meet these minimum qualifications will render the statement of qualifications non-responsive, and it will be removed from further consideration.

h. Evaluation Framework

i. Detailed Narrative Describing Proposer's Approach (35 points)

- This should not be a restatement of the RFQ's Scope of Services. It should reflect the unique value that the Proposer can offer in the light most pertinent to the Proposer, framed to address the needs and goals described in this RFQ.

ii. Analysis and Methods (35 points)

- An analysis of piece/s of legislation for which your group has successfully advocated in the past, including the impact of your advocacy and the impact of that legislation.
- An analysis of a piece of discretionary appropriations or member-directed spending for which your group has successfully advocated in the past, including the impact of your advocacy and the impact of that spending.
- An analysis of a federal agency action for which your group has successfully advocated in the past, including the impact of your advocacy and the impact of that agency action.

iii. Applications and Opportunities (35 points)

- A description of how your group would organize time to continually and effectively communicate with the Mayor and his team.
- Potential opportunities in the legislative process to increase the City's financial opportunities relative to appropriations, grants, programs, etc. and secure earmarks.
- Potential opportunities to influence legislative, rulemaking, or policy-making processes.

iv. Firm's Experience (25 points)

- Description of qualifications for scope of work.
- Description of prior experience with other municipal governments.
- Description of capability to meet schedules and deadlines.
- Description of communication, cooperation, and follow-through skills.
- Any additional relevant proficiencies beyond those requested by this RFQ.

v. Organization (20 points)

- One or more charts setting forth the tasks or services involved in executing the submission.
- Identifying the team member(s) responsible for each task or service, including name and position/title.

vi. Available Staff Experience (20 points)

- Provide the name and a current one-page resume, including projects within the past five years, for each of the personnel responsible for the tasks directly related to the tasks essential to the execution of this RFQ.

i. Fees and Expenses

- Fee proposals must be submitted as a separate document and will not be scored.
- Fees should be itemized by task or deliverable, as consistent with the submission's organization. The fee proposal should assign dollar amounts or percentages of total fees to each major work product. An ultimate agreement's payment schedule will match this itemization, unless revised.

j. Supplemental Information

- Can include any additional information Proposer would like to submit in support of its submission.